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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the organization of early childhood education and preschool education in Japan and describes how teachers are trained for positions in these schools. It is noted that the organization of such education in Japan has undergone considerable change since the first kindergarten was established in 1877. At that time the curriculum consisted of three subjects; in 1885 it was expanded to twenty subjects, then in 1947 was reduced to twelve subjects. In 1956 another transition occurred, and six areas of study were organized: health, social studies, nature, language, music and rhythms, and drawing and crafts. These six areas are used today. The day care curriculum is divided according to the children's ages. For 4- and 5-year-olds, the curriculum includes all six areas of study, four areas are used with 3-year-olds, three areas with 2-year-olds, and two areas with children one year old and under. Three points are stressed in training teachers of young children: (1) developing the teacher's personality with good ethical concepts; (2) including sufficient professional subjects; and (3) providing a sufficient amount of practice teaching. Professional subjects include child psychology, sociology, and pedagogy. The Ministry of Education requires two weeks of practice teaching, but more concentrated and supervised programs are available. (Author/DB)

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HOW DO WE EDUCATE TEACHERS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

---EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS IN JAPAN---

Emiko Ishigaki

Teachers' training in early childhood education is one of the most important problems in every countries. It is known that the base of human beings is formed in the time of younger generation.

In Japan education is regarded with great importance. In addition to the home education provided by parents there are many kindergartens and day-nurseries under excellent leadership of well traind teachers. The Ministry of Education sets the standards and course of study for the kindergartens. Three to five-year-old children go to the kindergarten attending on an average of four hours a day. The day-nursery is under the guidance of the Ministry of Health and Welfare. The children attending the day-nursery are from the ages of zero or a few months old to five years. On the average they are kept eight hours a day. The system of having kindergarten and day-nursery handled by two sectors of the national government creats many problems. There is a strong social demand to have the kindergartens and day-nurseries unified. Also many educators and scholars are in agreement with this demand though these efforts have not materialized yet.

All children who have had their sixth birthday will enter into elementary school in April. Six years of elementary school and three years of junior high school are compulsory education. Now more than 95% of five years old children are attending kindergartens or day-nurseries.

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In order to be an educator of children two qualifications are required. Not all of the colleges, junior colleges or special training schools can grant these certificates of specific qualification to the students.

The entrance examinations of colleges and junior colleges are more competitive than the other training schools. The student who graduates from four year college and has taken credits of the teachers' training course will be granted a first class certificate to teach kindergarten and nursery school. The ones who graduate from junior college and have taken credits of the teachers' training course will be granted a second class certificate. Other training schools' students study two years and will be granted only one certificate either for a kindergarten teacher or nursery school teacher.

The certification of day-nursery can be given through a government examination after graduating from high school. Now men who receive these certificates are increasing gradually.

The three important points of teacher training for young children are: to develop the teacher's personality with good ethical concepts; to include sufficient professional subjects; and to provide a sufficient amount of practice teaching.

The first point is a difficult problem in Japan where there is no religious basis. Shinto was the national religion before World War II. During World War II, Buddhists and Christian in Japan were enforced to worship Shinto Shrines and Imperial Courts. After World War II, the new constitution guaranteed the freedom of faith, however young men and women

are influenced that a non-religious person is more attractive. And the constitution decided to prohibit the teaching of any religion in public schools. They teach only Ethics there, but not specific religion. In private schools, specific religion sets for the spirit of the establishment of the school and students are free to worship in every day school life. Any way, the basis of the teachers' spiritual lives need same kind of belief.

As students begin to build their philosophy of child education, religious values are essential in developing the teacher's ideology.

In teachers' training colleges or schools in Japan, "principles of preschool education, but not philosophy of preschool education" are taught, I think the philosophy of preschool education should be added in the college curriculum.

The second point is to include sufficient professional subjects. The study of the major subjects such as child psychology, sociology, and pedagogy strengthens the ideology of the future teacher. In the actual experience of practice teaching the student can test and alter his ideologies. In Japan the curriculum of kindergarten is divided into six fields or areas. They are health, social studies, nature, language, music and rhythm, and drawing and craft. The students studying to be teachers are required to concentrate mostly in one of the areas. These six areas are taught identically in kindergarten. During each day all six areas are coordinated in the lesson plans. This is in contrast with the practice of teaching subjects separately in the elementary school.

The first kindergarten was established in Japan in 1877. The curriculum consisted of three subjects which were playing with toys, drawing, and knowlege. In 1885 the curriculum was developed to twenty subjects including block play, stories with morals, paper cutting, dance, songs, reading writing, and etc.. In 1947 a new plan was introduced in order that children could have happy experiences through twelve subject areas such as observing, rhythms, resting, free play, music, story telling, drawing creative crafts, observing nature, imaginative play, drama, puppet show, health education and celebration of annual holidays. In 1956 another transition occured and six areas of study were organized. These six areas are used today.

The following is a more detailed outline of what each area of study includes:

Health: table manners, eating habits, washing hands, toilet training, prevention of comunicable diseases, exercises on mats, sliding, swimming, swinging, playing ball, playing tag, climbing the jungle jim, muscle development exercises on a bridge with iron bars, exercises on horizonal iron bars, large blocks jumping rope, balancing on balance beam, rhythmical running, pushing and pulling, and fire drill.

Social Studies: KINDERGARTEN--- building a relationship between home and school as the child goes and returns each day; opening ceremony; taking care of personal things; and playing with others.

TEACHER AND FRIENDS--- birthday party, playing tag, excursions, Mother's Day, rainy season, clock shop play, Father's Day, summer vacation, staying over night in kindergarten, Day for Aged, fire drill, athletic meet exhibit of art and recreation,

Labor Thanksgiving Day, traffic safety, creative art projects rounding up the year, New Year's Day, postman, dancing, and farewell party.

Nature: planting and watering flowers and vegetables, gathering autumn leaves; taking care of animals such as rabbits, ducks, turtles, tadpoles, frogs, gold fish, snails, crawfish, buterflies, and ants; observing and playing with stones, sand, water, ice, and snow; recording daily weather, observing clouds, rain, and typhoons; observing the sun, moon, and stars; learning about electricity, light, heat, and sound through experiences of how to use electrical appliances, stepping on shadows, experimenting with heat, playing with a walkie-talkie, discovering the power of magnets, using a magnifying glass to closely observe objects, making objects such as boat, paper airplane, a toy windmill and tops; learning numbers, shapes, directions and time; taking a trip to the zoo, picking pears, collecting insects.

Language: speaking, expressing oneself, giving a reply, and explaining what one sees and hears; listening to teacher, picture story books, picture story cards, friend's conversation, and imitating a picture by reliving the situation. Children perform puppet plays, drama, and cards.

Music and Rhythms: singing children songs and nursery rhymes in groups and by self; playing rhythms band instruments with music; walking, jumping, running, skipping, and clapping with music; body movement to the rhythm of the music; imitating movements and sounds of animals, trains, cars, etc; appreciation of other children's movements; listening and apreciating of different rhythms, other children sining and mood; enjoying

music in everyday life; singing a known melody create own words; express feelings by using instruments, body movements alone and with a friend.

Drawing and Crafts: scribbling, water painting, making objects with mud, printing with objects such as vegetables and stones; painting one side of the paper and fold creating a double picture; blowing paint on paper; "furatage" rubbings on rough surface; sand play; torn paper; drawing pictures creatively by expression of feelings of experiences; creating with clay; drawing with paint, and crayon pastel; building and constructing with boxes making a dream house, animals, cars, etc.; a simplified wood-block printing technique-- using heavy cardboard make a pattern by gluing heavy cardboard on the cardboard, cover with ink, place paper on top, and rub making a print; mobiles; moveable parts pictures; cardboard balance objects; make own card; group projects of drawing together on large paper; making game cards; leaf-picture making; appreciating other children's art products; decorating room with flowers, ribbons, etc.

The curriculum of day-nursery is divided according to the children's ages. For four and five years old, the curriculum is divided into six areas as the same as kindergarten. For three years old, it is divided into four areas. They are health, social studies, language, and play. For two years old, it is divided in three areas. They are health, social studies, and play. For one and zero years old, it is divided into two areas. They are life and play. These dividions especially for the three years old children and youger are a new system.

Recently in Japan, working mothers are increasing and many children under three years old go to baby classes in the day nursery. So, the Ministry of Welfare decided these systems.

The third point is to provide a sufficient amount of practice teaching. The Ministry of Education states that two weeks of practice teaching is sufficients. But we know it is not enough. Naturally the practice teaching prepares a future teacher to know what should be taught as well as how to teach children in a well rounded program. Once a students has experienced practice teaching under the driection of a well trained teacher, there is little difficulty in locating a place to teach after graduation.

Seiwa College has a special system of practice teaching with out direct advice of the Ministory of Education. The students in Seiwa College do practice teaching for an average of four hours day and continue for 64 days. Seiwa College has two kindergartens, two day-nurseries and 34 contracting kindergartens or day-nurseries. The students change the place of practice teaching four times during the 64 days. They practice in the morning and return to the college in the afternoon for study. The discussions for practice teaching are held almost every day between kindergarten teachers and students and also once a week between professors and students.

Nowadays, many persons want to be teachers, but they find it so difficult to get jobs. Most of the women teachers do not want to stop teaching. Also many are not having children and it's a children's population is decreasing now. It is known fact the difficult to find employment in Japan, though

gradually 90% of the students of Seiwa College are hired as teachers. Some students continue in the graduate course but most of them become kindergarten or nursery teachers. The reason for this are; the students are trained well and have excellent practice teaching as Seiwa College has a long history of 100 years and therefore many graduates teach or supervise in many of the kindergartens and day-nurseries.

Moreover, continuing life long education is also important. In Japan, since the second certificate teacher will teach some years, then he or she can return to college and can receive the first certificate.

Teachers should continue study for the full time of his life. So, some teachers will go to graduate schoolafter they have taught some years.

As teachers in Japan share a responsibility to help other countries, it is the great hope that qualified teachers of early childhood education shall be trained to teach in kindergartens and day-nurseries not only in Japan but throughout Asia.